(d) if not, what were the reasons for the late delivery?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The delivery of the vessels could not be effected as per schedule and got delayed for the following reasons:—

(i) Extra time required to carry out modifications, changes and additional work necessitated due to change in the requirements projected during the construction phase.

(ii) Procurement of vital equipment ex-import got delayed due to changes in the import policy, and restrictions imposed on imports necessitated due to limited availability of foreign exchange.

(iii) The Public sector Undertakings failed to supply the equipment ordered on them in time; and

(iv) Go slow by the GSL workmen during 1996 and 1998.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Lives claimed by militancy

5565. SHRI CM. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the highest toll of life taken by militancy on any one day, in different parts of the country during January to April, 2000;

(b) the total number of lives claimed by militancy during this period; and

(c) the steps taken, including that by way of direct talks with militants and insurgents to deal with the menace of militancy in each case?

THE MINISTER OF STATE INTHE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CH. VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) and (b) As per available information, a total number of 1154 lives were claimed by militancy in different parts of the country during the period January to April, 2000. 35 persons belonging to Sikh community were massacred by the terrorists in Chittisinghpura village in Jammu and Kashmir on the intervening night of March 20-21, 2000.

(c) Government has been regularly sensitising all State Governments and concerned agencies regarding the activities of terrorists. Intelligence is

shared on continuous basis and support is provided by way of financial assistance for modernisation of State Police forces and deployment of Central Para-Military Forces. In order to prevent infiltration, border fencing and flood lighting has been undertaken along stretches of the Indo-Pakistan and Indo-Bangladesh borders, besides patroling. Diplomatic initiatives have also been taken with the concerned countries to curb cross-border terrorism.

In pursuance of the offer for talks made by the Government, ceasefire and peace talks with the NSCN (IM) are underway since 1 August 1997. Suspension of operations with the Bodo Liberation Tiger (BLT) was also announced earlier this year. NSCN(K) have also issued a Press Release offering a formal "ceasefire' with the Government of India and political talks.

Attacks on Christians

†5566. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a phase of attacks on Christians has started once again in India;

(b) whether it is also a fact that people killed/injured in these incidents are innocent; and

(c) if so, the action being taken by the Government to check such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOMEAFFAIRS (SHRI CH. VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) and (b) There have been a few incidents of violence over agitations due to admission/fee hikes in schools, theft/robbery etc. involving members of the Christian community in the recent past, however, these cannot be construed as a phase of attacks against them, as these incidents were related to law and order, where the parties happened to be from different communities by coincidence. Action has been initiated against the accused as per law.

(c) Public Order appears at Entry No. 1 under List-II-State List of the Vllth Schedule of the Constitution of India, and, it is the primary responsibility of the State Govts, to maintain law and order.

Detailed Guidelines on Communal Harmony were issued to all the States/ Union territories on 22.10.1997 suggesting various measures for controlling communal situations and matters connected with it, advisories are also being issued from time to time. The Central Government also assists the States by

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.